

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A volumetric metering device for the metered delivery of granular and powdery materials, ~~particularly the device adapted for use with a machines~~ for distributing such materials, and comprising:

a housing having two juxtaposed walls interconnected to each other by at least one interconnecting member so that the walls are rigidly held in a spaced-apart relationship, the housing being molded of plastic material and formed in a monolithic, integral, single piece; and

a metering member supported rotatably in the housing.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) A volumetric metering device for the metered delivery of granular and powdery materials, ~~particularly the device adapted for use with a machines~~ for distributing such materials, and comprising:

a housing having juxtaposed openings each with a dimension; and

a metering member having at least one metering wheel clamped between a pair of flanges, the dimension of at least one juxtaposed opening of the housing allowing the metering member, complete with the at least one metering wheel and the flanges, to pass from and towards the housing, at least one of the flanges being arranged to close the respective opening when the metering member is fitted in the operative position in the housing, and providing rotatable support of the metering member in the housing;

wherein the flanges carry peripherally at least two rolling tracks for at least one bearing or wheel, a shoulder being defined between the tracks, and the at least one bearing or wheel being restrained on the housing for the rotatable support of the metering member and for the axial restraint thereof via the shoulder.

4. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 3 in which both of the openings have dimensions such as to allow the metering member, complete with the at least one wheel and the flanges, to pass from and towards the housing, both of the flanges being arranged to close the respective openings when the metering member is fitted in the operative position in the housing, and providing rotatable support of the metering member in the housing.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 5~~3~~ in which at least one of the bearings or wheels is removable from the housing to allow the metering member to be moved away from and towards the housing.

7. (Currently Amended) A volumetric metering device for the metered delivery of granular and powdery materials, ~~particularly the device adapted for use with a machines~~ for distributing such materials, and comprising:

a metering member including a plurality of metering wheels which are structurally independent of one another and are interposed in a group between a pair of flanges, and a shaft acting as a tie between the flanges in order to clamp in a group the flanges and the metering wheels interposed between them, to constitute a unit which can be handled individually;

a housing having an input and a region including an output opening; and

first flow-separator means disposed in the region of the output opening of the housing and having a fixed plate supported, by notches, on shafts extending between side walls defined in the housing, the plate having, on the side facing the metering member, an arcuate profile complementary with the outer surface of a toothless wheel which is fitted centrally between the metering wheels of the metering member.

8. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 7 in which the shaft comprises, at one of its ends, a joint for connection to a drive shaft.

9. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 8 in which the shaft has means for clamping the group of flanges and wheels at the end remote from the joint, the joint acting as an abutment shoulder for the clamping.

10. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 7 in which the shaft has a polygonal cross-section.

11. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 10 in which each of the metering wheels has a hub having a hole of polygonal cross-section configured to be coupled with the polygonal cross-section of the shaft.

12. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 11 in which the holes in the hubs of the metering wheels have channelled profiles configured for coupling with the profile of the shaft and the number of channels is a multiple of the number of sides of the shaft so as to permit various angular positionings of the metering wheels on the shaft.

13. (Currently Amended) A volumetric metering device for the metered delivery of granular and powdery materials, ~~particularly the device adapted for use with a machines~~ for distributing such materials, and comprising a metering member carrying a plurality of metering wheels each having a hub with blades that extend radially from the hub and clamped together in a group, the blades having appendages located proximate the free ends of the blades to strengthen the blades and restraining the blades of one wheel on the blades of the adjacent wheel.

14. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 13 further comprising a disc having holes for the appendages, the disc being interposed between adjacent metering wheels and constituting an interconnection element between the blades of adjacent wheels.

15. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 14 in which the disc has seats for the appendages, the seats being offset relative to one another to permit an angularly offset interconnection of the sets of blades of adjacent wheels.

16. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 13 in which the metering wheels can be interchanged, combined, or both interchanged and combined with wheels of different dimensions.

17. (Currently Amended) A volumetric metering device for the metered delivery of granular and powdery materials, ~~particularly the device adapted for use with a machine-s~~ for distributing such materials, and comprising a metering member having metering wheels clamped in a group and keyed to a common drive-transmission shaft, and selective drive-transmission means interposed between the wheels and the shaft in order to exclude the wheels from driving by the shaft or, conversely, to connect the wheels for driving by the shaft, wherein the metering wheels are mounted reversibly on the shaft and the selective drive-transmission means comprises a release mechanism which brings about the driving connection between wheels and shaft in a first mounting condition and disconnection between wheels and shaft in a second mounting condition, in which the metering wheels are turned through 180° relative to the first mounting condition.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 18 ~~7~~ further comprising a scraper active on the wheels individually to remove deposits therefrom.

20. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 19 in which the scraper comprises a plurality of resilient bows each active on the respective wheel individually.

21. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 19 in which the scraper is movable relative to the metering member between an operative position in which the scraper is active on the wheels and an inoperative position in which the scraper is spaced therefrom.

22. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 19 in which the scraper and the metering wheels comprise a mutual engagement means for restraining the metering wheels in a stationary position when they are excluded from driving by the shaft.

23. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 22 in which the mutual engagement means comprises a crosspiece on each scraper and at least one tooth-like element on each metering wheel, the tooth-like element defining a leading face engaging the crosspiece when the metering wheel is oriented in the second mounting condition and defining an inclined rear face which slides relative to the crosspiece when the metering wheel is oriented in the first mounting condition.

24. (Currently Amended) A volumetric metering device for the metered delivery of granular and powdery materials, ~~particularly the device adapted for use with a~~ machines for distributing such materials, and comprising:

a housing;

a metering member supported rotatably in the housing;

a feeler device mounted in the housing and active in the manner of a scraper blade with a lip thereof operative on the metering member;

restraining means active on the feeler device for maintaining a predetermined distance between the feeler device and the metering member; and

a resilient preloading mechanism active on the feeler device in order to press its operative lip towards the metering member with predetermined preloading.

25. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 24 in which the feeler device comprises a plurality of feeler elements active individually and independently on respective corresponding metering wheels of the metering member.

26. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 25 in which the feeler elements are articulated pivotably by their respective ends remote from the operative lip on a shaft fixed to the housing, and means are provided for limiting their pivoting relative to the shaft.

27. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 26 in which the means for limiting pivoting comprises, at the end corresponding to the operative lip, a fork-shaped element between the prongs of which a second shaft is housed with predetermined clearance.

28. (Currently Amended) A volumetric metering device for the metered delivery of granular and powdery materials, ~~particularly the device adapted for use with a~~ machines for distributing such materials, and comprising

a housing;

a metering member supported rotatably in the housing;

a feeler device mounted in the housing and active in the manner of a scraper blade with a lip thereof operative on the metering member, the feeler device having a plurality of feeler elements active individually and independently on respective corresponding metering wheels; and

means for altering locally the angle of introduction between the feeler device and the metering member, the means being associated with the feeler device, immediately upstream of the operative lip, and including a plurality of separators interposed between the feeler elements and each having a nib projecting towards the metering device.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 29 in which the housing has an input and a region including an output opening and the device further comprises first flow-separator means disposed in the region of the output opening of the housing.

31. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 30 in which the first separator means comprises a fixed plate supported, by notches, on shafts extending between side walls defined in the housing, the plate having, on the side facing the metering member, an arcuate profile complementary with the outer surface of a toothless wheel which is fitted centrally between the metering wheels.

32. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 31 further comprising second separator means disposed in the housing upstream of the metering member so as to separate products, which may optionally be different, at the input.

33. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 32 in which the second separator means comprises a fixed plate having an arcuate profile complementary with the surface of the toothless wheel.

34. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 3 in which the at least one metering wheel can be interchanged, combined, or both interchanged and combined with wheels of different dimensions.

35. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 7 in which the metering wheels can be interchanged, combined, or both interchanged and combined with wheels of different dimensions.

36. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 1 in which the housing has an input and a region including an output opening and the device further comprises first flow-separator means disposed in the region of the output opening of the housing.

37. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 36 in which the first separator means comprises a fixed plate supported, by notches, on shafts extending between side walls defined in the housing, the plate having, on the side facing the metering member, an arcuate profile complementary with the outer surface of a toothless wheel which is fitted centrally between metering wheels of the metering member.

38. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 37 further comprising second separator means disposed in the housing upstream of the metering member so as to separate products, which may optionally be different, at the input.

39. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 38 in which the second separator means comprises a fixed plate having an arcuate profile complementary with the surface of the toothless wheel.

40. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 3 in which the housing has an input and a region including an output opening and the device further comprises first flow-separator means disposed in the region of the output opening of the housing.

41. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 40 in which the first separator means comprises a fixed plate supported, by notches, on shafts extending between side walls defined in the housing, the plate having, on the side facing the metering member, an arcuate profile complementary with the outer surface of a toothless wheel which is fitted centrally between metering wheels of the metering member.

42. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 41 further comprising second separator means disposed in the housing upstream of the metering member so as to separate products, which may optionally be different, at the input.

43. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 42 in which the second separator means comprises a fixed plate having an arcuate profile complementary with the surface of the toothless wheel.

44. (Canceled)

45. (Canceled)

46. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim ~~45~~ further comprising second separator means disposed in the housing upstream of the metering member so as to separate products, which may optionally be different, at the input.

47. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 46 in which the second separator means comprises a fixed plate having an arcuate profile complementary with the surface of the toothless wheel.

48. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 13 further comprising a housing having an input and a region including an output opening, and first flow-separator means disposed in the region of the output opening of the housing.

49. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 48 in which the first separator means comprises a fixed plate supported, by notches, on shafts extending between side walls defined in the housing, the plate having, on the side facing the metering member, an arcuate profile complementary with the outer surface of a toothless wheel which is fitted centrally between the metering wheels of the metering member.

50. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 49 further comprising second separator means disposed in the housing upstream of the metering member so as to separate products, which may optionally be different, at the input.

51. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 50 in which the second separator means comprises a fixed plate having an arcuate profile complementary with the surface of the toothless wheel.

52. (Currently Amended) A volumetric metering device for the metered delivery of granular and powdery materials, the device adapted for use with a machine for distributing such materials and comprising:

a metering member having metering wheels clamped in a group and keyed to a common drive-transmission shaft, and selective drive-transmission means interposed between the wheels and the shaft in order to exclude the wheels from driving by the shaft or, conversely, to connect the wheels for driving by the shaft;

~~The device according to claim 17 further comprising a housing having an input and a region including an output opening;~~ and

first flow-separator means disposed in the region of the output opening of the housing.

53. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 52 in which the first separator means comprises a fixed plate supported, by notches, on shafts extending between side walls defined in the housing, the plate having, on the side facing the metering member, an arcuate profile complementary with the outer surface of a toothless wheel which is fitted centrally between the metering wheels of the metering member.

54. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 53 further comprising second separator means disposed in the housing upstream of the metering member so as to separate products, which may optionally be different, at the input.

55. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 54 in which the second separator means comprises a fixed plate having an arcuate profile complementary with the surface of the toothless wheel.

56. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 24 in which the housing has an input and a region including an output opening and the device further comprises first flow-separator means disposed in the region of the output opening of the housing.

57. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 56 in which the first separator means comprises a fixed plate supported, by notches, on shafts extending between side walls defined in the housing, the plate having, on the side facing the metering member, an arcuate profile complementary with the outer surface of a toothless wheel which is fitted centrally between metering wheels of the metering member.

58. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 57 further comprising second separator means disposed in the housing upstream of the metering member so as to separate products, which may optionally be different, at the input.

59. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 58 in which the second separator means comprises a fixed plate having an arcuate profile complementary with the surface of the toothless wheel.

60. (New) A volumetric metering device for the metered delivery of granular and powdery materials, the device adapted for use with a machine for distributing such materials and comprising a metering member including a plurality of metering wheels which are structurally independent of one another and are interposed in a group between a pair of flanges, and a shaft acting as a tie between the flanges in order to clamp in a group the flanges and the metering wheels interposed between them, to constitute a unit which can be handled individually; wherein the shaft has a polygonal cross-section, each of the metering wheels has a hub having a hole of polygonal cross-section configured to be coupled with the polygonal cross-section of the shaft, and the holes in the hubs of the metering wheels have channelled profiles configured for coupling with the profile of the shaft and the number of channels is a multiple of the number of sides of the shaft so as to permit various angular positionings of the metering wheels on the shaft.